



Program Brief

- **AMERICANIZATION AND ANTI-AMERICANISM:
THE DETERIORATION IN EUROPEAN PERCEPTION
OF THE U.S.**
- **THE RISE OF CONSERVATISM IN AMERICA**
- **THE IMPACT OF JAZZ ON AMERICAN MOVIES AND
MUSICAL THEATER**

Lectures with

Richard PELLs

Professor of History, University of Texas at Austin

May 29 – June 1, 2006

Background information provided by the
American Reference Center

Schmidgasse 14, 1080 Vienna

Tel. 405 30 33

Fax 406 52 60

e-mail: arc@usembassy.at

<http://www.usembassy.at>

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

HOW “AMERICAN” IS AMERICAN CULTURE?

Webchat with Dr. Richard Pells

April 20, 2006

Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

History professor Richard Pells discussed the effects of American culture in other countries and of foreign cultures on America, examining how "American" is American culture.

Full transcript: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Apr/20-988637.html>

THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP - MOVING OUR PARTNERSHIP FORWARD

Remarks by U.S. Ambassador Susan R. McCaw

Diplomatic Academy, Vienna, April 6, 2006

... Europe and the United States have a common agenda of global democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. ...

There will always be transatlantic differences. During the Cold War, we differed constantly on tactics. But we were united in our objectives, which were rooted in our common values. In the current struggle to advance freedom, our common values again are our guiding principles. And again there will be debate among us, but the debate is worth it, because the stakes are indeed so high.

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Full transcript: <http://www.usembassy.at/en/embassy/speeches/040606.htm>

Websites

- U.S. – EU/ U.S. Embassy website http://www.usembassy.at/en/policy/us_eu.htm
- Western Europe/ Bureau of International Information Programs – U.S. Department of State http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/europe_eurasia/us_eu_relations.html
- Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs/ U.S. Department of State <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/>

The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, headed by Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried, implements U.S. foreign policy in Europe and Eurasia. The Bureau promotes U.S. interests in the region on issues such as national security, NATO enlargement, coordination with the European Union and other regional organizations, support for democracy, human rights, civil society, economic prosperity, the war on terrorism, and nonproliferation.

ARTICLES

For full text please contact the American Reference Center: arc@usembassy.at

- **AMERICA: LOST IN TRANSLATION**

By Richard Pells

The Chronicle of Higher Education, October 14, 2005, vol. 52, iss. 8, pg. B.6

Abstract: Pells discusses his trip to Indonesia as a Fulbright scholar where he spent three weeks giving a series of lectures on American history and the global impact of American culture to students and faculty members at universities in Java. He was overcome by culture shock, not only were Indonesians very friendly, helpful people-- they were also quite ignorant of authentic American culture--most of what they know is learned from movies which has provided them with stereotypical images.

- **NOT WITH A WHIMPER: VISIONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION IN FICTION AND FILM**

By Richard Pells

Electronic Journal *Today's Nuclear Equation*, March 2005

Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0305/ijpe/pells.htm>

Abstract: It has so far proven very "difficult for novelists or filmmakers to portray the mentality of the stateless terrorist, the messianic fanatic who seeks to murder people indiscriminately, for no obvious purpose except to pile up the bodies," says Richard Pells, professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin. Particularly during the Cold War, Pell says, many novelists and filmmakers worked "with utmost seriousness" to "make comprehensible our universal peril."

- **FROM MODERNISM TO THE MOVIES. THE GLOBALIZATION OF AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

By Richard Pells

European Journal of American Culture, September 2004, vol. 23, iss. 2

Abstract: The cultural relationship between the United States and world has never been one-sided. On the contrary, America was and continues to be as much a consumer of foreign intellectual and artistic influences as it has been a shaper of the world's entertainment and tastes. Indeed, American culture has spread throughout the world precisely because it has drawn on foreign styles and ideas. Americans have then reassembled and repackaged the cultural products they received from abroad, and retransmitted them to the rest of the planet. In effect, Americans have specialized in selling the fantasies and folklore of other people back to them. This is the reason America's culture has been so popular for so long in so many places.

- **AMERICAN HISTORIANS WOULD DO WELL TO GET OUT OF THE COUNTRY**

By Richard Pells

The Chronicle of Higher Education, June 20, 2003, vol. 49, iss. 41, pg. B.7

Abstract: We have learned a lot from those revisionist interpretations of America's past. Yet the fixation on race and gender has led to a severe case of tunnel vision among American historians and literary scholars, along with an oppressive orthodoxy about what kinds of courses should be taught and who should be hired at universities. Given their relentless preoccupation with the inequities of American life, contemporary Americanists now write and teach about the United States from the "inside." It seems rarely to occur to them that they might learn more about the strengths and deficiencies of America by examining its history and culture from a perspective outside the national borders. Nor do they consider it crucial, as their predecessors did, to spend time abroad.

- **FILM: MOVIES AND MODERN AMERICA**

By Richard Pells

Electronic Journal *The Arts in America: New Directions*, April 2003

Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0403/ijse/pells.htm>

What is a "typical" American movie? People throughout the world are sure they know. A characteristic American film, they insist, has flamboyant special effects and a sumptuous décor, each a reflection of America's nearly mythic affluence. Furthermore, American movies revel in fast-paced action and a celebration of individual ingenuity embodied in the heroics of an impeccably dressed, permanently youthful Hollywood star. And they feature love stories that lead, inevitably if often implausibly, to happy endings.

Yet over the past 15 years, for every high-tech, stunt-filled *Mission Impossible*, there are serious and even disturbing films such as *American Beauty* and *The Hours*. For every conventional Hollywood blockbuster apparently designed to appeal to the predilections of 12-year-old boys, there have been complex and sophisticated movies such as *Traffic*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Magnolia*, and *About Schmidt* that are consciously made for grown-ups. What is therefore remarkable about contemporary American movies is their diversity, their effort to explore the social and psychological dimensions of life in modern America, and their ability to combine entertainment with artistry.

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- **AMERICAN CULTURE GOES GLOBAL, OR DOES IT?**

By Richard Pells

The Chronicle of Higher Education, April 12, 2002, vol. 48, iss. 31, pg. B.7

Abstract: As a nation of immigrants from the 19th to the 21st centuries, and as a haven in the 1930s and '40s for refugee scholars and artists, the US has been a recipient as much as an exporter of global culture. Indeed, the influence of immigrants and African-Americans on the US explains why its culture has been so popular for so long in so many places.

- **AMERICAN STUDIES: ON THE MARGINS IN EUROPE**

By Richard Pells

The Chronicle of Higher Education, August 17, 2001, vol. 47, iss. 49, pg. B.11

Abstract: Pells discusses some of the reasons why Europeans are persistently uninterested in the American past. There has been a long-held notion that Americans have no history, or at least no sensitivity to the ironies and tragedies that accompany a reverence for the past.

- **THE TREATY ON GLOBAL WARMING; AMERICA GETS THE SNUB**

By Richard Pells

Newsday (New York), July 29, 2001, pg. B04

For the first time since the end of the Cold War - indeed, since the end of World War II - Europe and the rest of the world are ignoring the United States on a matter of worldwide importance.

This past week, representatives of 178 nations meeting in Bonn, Germany, agreed on a set of policies to deal with the problem of global warming. They did so without America's guidance or approval.

Americans, accustomed to dominating international conferences, may well be shocked by this indifference to their views and to those of their president. They should not be. The current debate over whether and how best to curb the emission of carbon dioxide is substantive, but it is also symbolic.

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- **SPREAD OF GLOBALIZATION DOESN'T FAZE THE YOUNG**

By Richard Pells

International Herald Tribune, February 2, 2001, pg. 7

Over the past several weeks, an older generation of Germans has listened to Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer refight the battle of Frankfurt. At the same time, an older generation of Americans continues to refight the battle of Florida. In each case, the issue is political legitimacy. Was the German government of the 1970s genuinely democratic or merely a facade behind which quasi-fascist policies flourished? Does George W. Bush have a mandate for his programs and conservative cabinet selections, or was the 2000 presidential election stolen by unscrupulous politicians and judges?

For university students in Germany and the United States, the questions that haunt their elders are unimportant or incomprehensible. Most German students today don't see themselves squatting in unoccupied buildings and flinging rocks at the police. Nor do American students argue about who really won Florida's electoral votes. The young in both countries live in an age when the global economy and global culture take precedence. So for them, the state and its representatives are not illegitimate. They are irrelevant.

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- **WHO'S AFRAID OF STEVEN SPIELBERG?**

By Richard Pells

Diplomatic History, Summer 2000, vol. 24, iss. 3, pg. 495

Abstract: Pells comments on Jessica Gienow-Hecht's analysis of America's cultural hegemony. The US didn't create mass culture; rather, its roots are European.

- **MASS CULTURE IS NOW EXPORTED FROM ALL OVER TO ALL OVER**

By Richard Pells

International Herald Tribune, July 12, 2000, pg. 9

George Orwell was right. We are all learning to love Big Brother. On July 5, CBS launched its version of "Big Brother," a hugely popular German television show. And the network hopes to duplicate the phenomenal success in the United States of two programs originally created in England, "Survivor" and "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." So, the day after Americans commemorated their declaration of independence from Britain, they found that a growing portion of their popular culture is dependent on imports from Europe. There are other signs that, when it comes to their entertainment, Americans are not in Kansas any more. Two years ago, "Shakespeare in Love" - hardly a film about the American heartland - won the Oscar for best picture over "Saving Private Ryan," a tribute to old-fashioned American virtues. At the same time, a surprisingly large number of American moviegoers - who were once notoriously hostile to foreign films - flocked to "Il Postino" and "Life is Beautiful" from Italy and "Run Lola Run" from Germany. Yet do any of these trends mean that the normal, one-way flow of entertainment from the United States to the rest of the world is being reversed? Is America ceasing to be the exclusive retailer of mass culture while other countries are merely consumers? Not if you listen to the complaints of European filmmakers and television producers. America's appetite for their cultural products is an old and bitter story. Europeans have grumbled for decades that Hollywood and the television networks swipe their artistic ideas, dumb them down for American viewers and sell back the resulting cultural garbage to the global audience. Thus, to Europeans, the eagerness of CBS to bring "Big Brother" to the United States is not a compliment to German ingenuity but only the latest example of cultural exploitation.

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- **THE LOCAL AND GLOBAL LOYALTIES OF EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS**

By Richard Pells

The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 2, 1997, vol. 43, iss. 34, pg. B.4

Abstract: Pells contends that the ubiquitous presence of US popular culture in Europe is only a superficial sign of America's influence and that the idea that Europe has become a miniature version of the US is a myth. Europeans have adapted American popular and intellectual culture to their own needs, tastes and traditions.

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The program page on the **lectures with Professor Richard Pells** will be available at:

<http://www.usembassy.at/en/embassy/photo/pells.htm>

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